



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Mennta Energy Solutions

ADDRESS: 13A Bankside
Kidlington
OX5 1JE

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Bethan Clark

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 15 October 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 28 January 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Mennta Energy Solutions (Mennta/the Provider) is a training provider. Mennta is an Icelandic word meaning 'to educate'. It provides both open and bespoke training courses and a wide range of internally assessed training modules to meet the needs of the commercial energy marketplace.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the Provider acts as the hub for the provision that is offered in the UK, the rest of Europe, the Middle East and parts of South America. This activity is run from Mennta's office in Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Mennta's main office is in New Jersey in the United States of America (USA). In addition, there is an office in Singapore. Only the provision in the UK is covered by BAC accreditation and this inspection.

The Provider was created in July 2000 as the result of a merger of the UK-based College of Petroleum and Energy Studies, which was founded in 1982, and the USA-based Princeton Energy Programme, founded in 1991. The merged businesses were initially renamed the Oxford Princeton Programme Incorporated. As a result of a management buy-out in 2004, Oxford Princeton Programme is now privately owned by the current USA-based President and Chief Executive Officer. The change of name from Oxford Princeton Programme to Mennta was made in January 2017.

Mennta aims to be the world's leading provider of education and training to the energy industry and markets.

The Provider is managed day-to-day by the Vice-President of Global Operations and Product Management. This role is supported by the Global Online Training Manager and a course administrator.

The UK office moved in January 2018 from central Oxford to a modern commercial industrial site in Kidlington, about six miles north of central Oxford. The Provider's UK training delivery venues are in London.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Mennta offers full-time and part-time, non-accredited courses of one to five days' duration. The courses focus on areas relating to oil, natural gas, liquid natural gas, liquid petroleum gas, power, electricity, bio-fuels, renewables, trading, derivatives, hedging, finance products and risk management.

The courses are offered in three formats. These are face-to-face open courses that anyone can join, virtual online courses and online interactive courses for individuals. At the time of the inspection, all courses were being delivered part time virtually and online to groups of between three and 20 participants. Each course has an advertised number of live sessions, as well as online pre-study or homework. The virtual sessions are of between two and four hours in duration and courses are delivered over two to six sessions, depending on the content agreed according to the subject matter.

For the face-to-face London-based courses, participants or their employers book hotel accommodation. Participants on the majority of face-to-face courses take an interactive online preliminary course. The preliminary courses have an assessment at the end of each stage of learning, together with a final assessment of the whole course. All face-to-face courses are led by one or two trainers selected for particular courses from a team of about 80. Bespoke courses are also available. These are developed for participant groups from individual oil companies and are delivered at the oil companies' own venues.

Courses are primarily targeted at non-technical, middle-management staff, as well as some new recruits, who need a basic background in understanding the oil technology and supply business as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The very large majority of participants are sponsored by their employers, who also decide when it is appropriate for their employees to participate. The very small minority of prospective participants who are independently enrolled are encouraged to seek advice on appropriate courses from the Provider's team via e-mail or

telephone. There are no specified prerequisites for enrolment. Enrolment is for specific courses and takes place prior to the delivery date.

At the time of the inspection, seven participants were registered on courses in Credit, Liquidity and Counterparty Risk Management in Energy Trading. All were adults, the majority were female and all were from Singapore.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the Vice-President of Global Operations and Product Management, the Global Online Training Manager, a course administrator and trainers. A range of documentation was scrutinised, recorded lessons were observed and a virtual tour of the premises was undertaken. The Provider was helpful in the organisation of the inspection and provided all requested documentation in a timely manner.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	11 & 14 January 2010
Interim	1 March 2011
Re-accreditation	8–9 April 2014
Interim	19 April 2016
Re-accreditation	21 & 28 February 2018

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

In March 2020, Mennta temporarily ceased instructor-led classroom training and has adapted around one-third of its courses for virtual and online delivery. These courses are shorter in duration than the face-to-face versions and are delivered in sessions of between two and four hours.

2. Response to actions points in last report

2.4 The Provider must ensure that the individual handbooks for staff, tutors and participants are complete, coherent and consistent so that the members of each group are fully aware of the requirements and responsibilities of the other groups.

Individual handbooks have been updated and are now suitably coherent and consistent. With the introduction of virtual training, procedures for course delivery have been revised and presented in the form of a checklist, which is followed by trainers and staff. Trainer and participant handbooks have the same contents and staff have access to all of these documents and so are familiar with the requirements and responsibilities of all groups.

5.3 The Provider must improve their response time to prospective participants.

The response time has been set at 24 hours and effective procedures have been put in place to ensure this is met. Course evaluations include a question regarding participant satisfaction with response times. This receives consistently high scores.

6.1 Attendance and punctuality requirements must be clearly and quantitatively defined and highlighted to ensure there is a clear understanding of the requirements.

Attendance and punctuality requirements are appropriate and are clearly specified in the participant handbook. Full attendance is expected and any absence is followed up promptly by the administrator. Participants receive a certificate on completion of their course and this includes their recorded attendance.

11.3 The Provider must re-introduce a routine programme of class observations.

Classroom observations of face-to-face sessions were taking place monthly prior to March 2020. Now that delivery is virtual, all sessions are observed. A well-designed report form covers key aspects of delivery. There is an appropriate emphasis on the suitability of content and delivery techniques for virtual training. Each aspect is graded and notes or explanations are provided if necessary. Clear targets are set to support improvement. Trainers confirm that feedback from the observers is helpful. Inspection findings confirm this view.

11.4 Mennta must provide appropriate opportunities for the tutors to share best practice in order to support them in developing their pedagogic skills.

An online forum was created for the trainers to use and communicate with each other and to share best practice. While trainers are aware that it is available, they have not yet contributed to it and there is no system of peer observations of the virtual courses to support trainers in developing their online pedagogical skills.

17.3 18.2 The Provider must develop an induction checklist for use by all tutors.

For courses delivered face to face, an induction checklist was developed and provided in the trainer information pack. An appropriate induction checklist has been created for the Provider's virtual courses, which focuses on use of the virtual conferencing platform. This ensures that participants gain maximum benefit from their course.

17.4 The Provider must provide a single 24-hour emergency contact telephone number.

A single 24-hour emergency contact telephone number is provided to participants by e-mail. At face-to-face training, it is also provided in a hard copy of the participant handbook.

18.1 International participants must receive appropriate information about living in the UK, for example relating to travel, the climate and finance.

International participants are sent a handbook prior to arrival, with links to websites providing key information on living in London.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should consider providing administrative staff support at the London training venues to ensure consistency in UK course delivery and better manage any potential issues that may arise.

Virtual delivery is extremely well supported, with two members of administrative staff always on hand to manage practical issues.

The Provider should continue its development of flow charts and scripts for routine tasks.

Mennta now has suitable written procedures for all client-related activity from first contact with the sales team through to course delivery. Given the small size of the UK team, this is sufficient to meet the Provider's needs.

Mennta should provide clear information about the duration of the online preliminary course so that the participants are able to plan their course of study appropriately.

This information is now clearly stated on the course contents page, under the heading of prerequisite self study.

The Provider should consider asking the tutors to provide written feedback and to obtain feedback from the employer sponsors of the delegates.

Tutors are asked to provide written feedback. Evidence was seen of formal, detailed trainer reports and e-mailed feedback provided by trainers. Trainers confirm that their suggestions are taken up by Mennta's managers to improve provision.

On completion of a course, employer sponsors are contacted to check that they are satisfied. The Provider works with employers to address any issues that are identified, and any areas for improvement are referred to senior managers.

The Provider is recommended to provide a brief profile of each of the participants for the tutors to enable them to better meet their individual needs.

Participants complete a questionnaire in advance of the face-to-face courses, or an electronic poll at the beginning of a virtual course. This is used by trainers to adjust the time devoted to particular aspects of the course in response to participants' needs or interests. Bespoke courses are more finely tuned to the participants' needs, based on detailed information provided by the employer.

The participant registration procedure should more clearly emphasise and identify any special needs and impairments that participants have, so that reasonable adjustments can be made at the start of the course.

The application form has been revised to include a question designed to elicit disclosure of any participant needs that will require adjustments.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The roles and responsibilities of managers and staff at all levels are clearly defined and well documented. Good channels of communication between managers, staff and trainers working remotely ensure that all are kept up to date with developments at Mennta, and that decisions are implemented effectively.

Administrative support is clearly defined and suitable for the size of operation. Policies and procedures are appropriately documented and disseminated. Data collection and collation systems are effective.

Information on the Provider's website is up to date and accurate. Detailed course descriptions enable employers and participants to select training that most closely meets their needs. Sales staff are available to provide further guidance and they respond to all enquiries in a timely manner. Participant feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with the course registration process.

Feedback from all stakeholders is gathered consistently and used effectively to drive improvements to provision. The course evaluation form is well designed to elicit information on key aspects of delivery, and satisfaction rates are closely tracked to ensure that target satisfaction levels are maintained. Participant and trainer comments are used promptly to make ongoing adjustments to course content and materials.

The Provider has robust procedures for reviewing all aspects of performance. Consequently, appropriate areas for development are identified and actions to address them are agreed. While this process is evidenced in regularly updated action plans, the results of the Provider's reviews are not consolidated in a written report that makes reference to analysed data.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Programme management is effective. The very experienced Programme Manager ensures that courses are regularly updated to meet the needs of participants and sponsoring employers. Participants' course evaluations demonstrate consistently high levels of satisfaction with the content and delivery of training.

Courses have been well adapted for virtual delivery. Suitably experienced trainers have worked with managers and staff to devise procedures for training via a conferencing platform, which has resulted in high levels of participant engagement and interactive learning. Appropriate guidelines have been created for trainers planning for virtual delivery.

Training materials are of high quality and have been suitably adapted for virtual delivery. These include structured participant tasks, such as break-out group discussions.

During virtual training sessions, high levels of support from staff ensure that any technical issues are promptly resolved and participants are able to communicate effectively with the trainer and their fellow participants.

Online pre-training is well designed to ensure that all participants are prepared with a suitable level of knowledge to undertake the course for which they have registered. Instructions for use of the pre-training course are clear and participants' understanding is regularly checked through interactive quizzes. The training materials are professional in appearance and easy to use.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Welfare provision is well designed to meet the needs of the professionals attending work-related training.

Participants receive appropriate advice and guidance prior to registration and are sent an information pack with details of how to join the course, whether in person or online. Staff are available to answer any questions prior to the start of the course. Participants' course evaluations confirm that this is effective.

Induction is scripted and covers all necessary information to ensure that participants settle quickly onto their course. For courses delivered face to face, it includes information on the venue, for example on health and safety procedures. For virtual courses, the induction provides training in the use of the platform for communicating with the trainer, staff and other participants.

Participants receive a handbook containing all relevant policies and information on complaints procedures. Staff are on hand at all times to deal with any concerns that participants may have.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The premises consist of a suite of three offices, which are used exclusively by the sales team, with managers and other staff working remotely. The offices are sufficient in size and are suitably equipped for the team working there. They are secure, clean and well maintained.

Training is delivered in appropriate hired venues in London. A range of venues is used depending on the number of participants. The venues provide facilities for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Management is highly effective and continuously seeks to improve the provision.

Virtual courses are engaging and encourage good levels of participant participation.

There is comprehensive support for trainers and participants during virtual training sessions.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
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RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

The Provider is recommended to introduce a system of peer observations of its virtual courses to support trainers in developing their online pedagogical skills.

The Provider should produce an annual written performance report that makes reference to data that supports the Provider’s judgments on its success.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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